

Remarks

Claims 1-13 are presented for reconsideration, with claims 1 and 13 being the independent claims. Claim 1 is sought to be amended. No new matter has been entered by any amendments.

The Examiner is thanked for indicating claim 13 was allowed, and claim 11 contained allowable subject matter.

The Examiner is also thanked for her time during several telephonic interviews on February 22, 2007, during which the Examiner implicitly agreed that the above amendments to claim 1 would make it allowable over the applied references.

Based on the above amendments and following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 1, 4-10, and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over JP 06-215997 to Matsumoto ("Matsumoto") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,593,606 to Owen et al. ("Owen"). Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Matsumoto in view of Owen, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,952,818 to Zhang et al. ("Zhang"). Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Matsumoto in view of Owen, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,342,517 to Johnson et al. ("Johnson"). Applicant traverses these rejections.

As agreed to by the Examiner in the above-mentioned interview, Claim 1 has been amended to clarify features that distinguish over the applied references. To summarize, none of the applied references, whether taken alone or in combination, teach or suggest an axis defined as extending between a source of a light beam and the first optical device wherein the source of the light beam, the variable wave plate, the reticle, and the first optical device all lie along the axis as recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the rejection of claim 1, and find it allowable over the applied references. Also, at least based on their dependency to claim 1, claims 2-10 and 12 should be found allowable over the applied references.

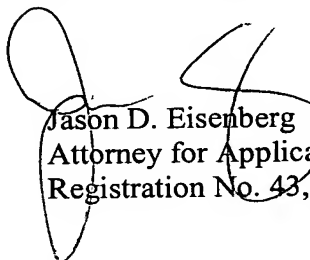
Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicant believes that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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